



Collaborative Governance and Movement Toward a Just Transition: Boston's Building Emissions Reduction & Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO 2.0)

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ACE's mission and theory of change

ACE builds the power of communities of color and low income communities in Massachusetts to eradicate environmental racism and classism, create healthy and sustainable communities, and achieve environmental justice.

Since our founding in 1994, our members and staff have been at the forefront of the fight for environmental justice. In 2004, ACE transitioned to a member-led, base-building organization. We believe both community organizing and legal advocacy are necessary to remedy the impacts of systemic and environmental racism.

BERDO 2.0: How did we get here?

For over 2 years, ACE partnered with the City of Boston and NRDC in a process facilitated by One Square World, to craft the updated Building Emissions Reduction Ordinance (BERDO 2.0).

Through this process, about 200 community members from City Life/Vida Urbana, New England United for Justice, Chinese Progressive Association, and ACE helped to shape BERDO 2.0.



How was this process different?

Every step of the process, we made sure that the perspectives of our members & local residents were incorporated into the policy.

This is how we make a #JustTransition a reality - listening to impacted communities & creating policies that do not rely on extractive fossil fuels and benefit people on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

Community voice at all stages



What does this mean for community?

The community was clear: residents wanted more than a policy that would reduce emissions.

Our co-conspirators at One Square World created a skit that follows the journey of a renter as she learns about the dangers of building emissions and how taking action to shape policies like BERDO 2.0 can make a difference:

<https://vimeo.com/onesquareworld>

Community Feedback

We heard people's concerns and priorities for the new policy:

1. improve indoor and outdoor air quality
2. reduce energy bills
3. Not fuel gentrification and displacement
4. make homes more energy efficient, and
5. Create jobs for local residents

We fought to include all of these priorities in the policy.

Residents wanted to make sure that the policy includes these priorities:



Improves air quality for residents



Reduces renter energy bills



Does not contribute to displacement



Improves heating + cooling in homes



Creates jobs for residents



Is good for the environment

How buildings meet the standard

Building Improvements



Energy-efficient
and/or electric
space heating +
cooling, water
heating + cooking



Better
insulation
+ tighter
seals



Efficient
lighting +
electric
appliances



Add solar
panels to
your
building

What changes will building owners make?

Building owners will be required to make improvements to their properties to reduce emissions, including more energy efficient appliances, improved insulation, or adding solar panels to the property.

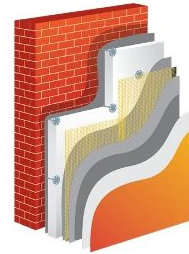
This will improve quality of life for residents and workers in those buildings.

How buildings meet the standard

Building Improvements



Energy-efficient and/or electric space heating + cooling, water heating + cooking



Better insulation + tighter seals



Efficient lighting + electric appliances



Add solar panels to your building

The Policy Ingredients



Offsets are not an option

Building owners will also have the option of purchasing renewable energy to comply with the standard.

We pushed the city not to include the purchase of carbon offsets as an option for compliance. An example of an offset is giving companies the option pay to plant trees in another place (often the Amazon rainforest) rather than do something locally. They let companies feel like they're addressing climate change without actually reducing emissions.

How buildings meet the standard

Buying Clean Electricity

Most buildings owners won't be able to meet the targets just by doing building improvements. They will also need to buy renewable energy for electricity.



- Buy from a specific renewable energy source from **outside** your neighborhood that you use for your electricity (for example Community Choice Electricity)
- Buy Renewable Energy Credits to create new renewable energy projects.

What if that's not enough?

If building owners don't meet the standard, they can make a payment into a fund. We pushed the city to prioritize projects that benefit EJ populations, support housing justice and reduce displacement, and require strong standards for workers.

Payment to the Building Equity Fund

(Building Emissions Equitable Investment Fund)

If the building doesn't meet the standard, they can pay into the Building Equity Fund. The fund will support local emission reduction projects that benefit environmental justice populations in Boston and prioritize:

- air quality improvements
- lowering energy burdens
- low-income affordable housing and housing stabilization
- worker standards and access to green jobs
- clean energy installations

The fund would be housed at the City and overseen by the Review Board.

What About Community Accountability?

Our Diesel Emissions Reduction Ordinance (#DERO) campaign taught us community oversight of implementation & enforcement is critical.

We pushed for a 2/3 majority of the review board to be nominated by community-based orgs with an expertise in EJ, housing, & climate justice.

Review Board

The Review Board and the City's Environment Department make sure that building owners meet the standard and create community benefits.

Roles of the Review Board:

- Accountability
- Managing the Building Equity Fund
- Recommending regulations changes
- Approval of pathways for buildings with unique circumstances

*Community
accountability!*



What if a building owner can't meet the standard?

Building owners can request a hardship plan from the review board. We wanted to make sure the board could hold building owners accountable for the impacts of non-compliance, which include higher energy bills and the health burdens of poor air quality.

Hardship Plans

If building owners cannot meet the standard, they can apply for a Hardship Plan to the review board.

The review board may grant building owners more time to meet carbon reduction goals or flexibility on the target and options to meet the target. The board can also set additional conditions to ensure community benefits linked to:

- Anti-displacement
- Preventing increased energy costs for tenants
- Indoor air quality
- Transparency
- Employment standards

What if I have questions or need support?

There will be a resource hub managed by the city that will connect building owners and tenants with the resources & expertise they need to comply with #BERDO 2.0.

Hub

A program created and managed by the City for building owners and tenants to get support to meet the goal of lowering emissions and providing community benefits.



Resources will include connections to incentives and financing, expert guidance, training opportunities, fair housing resources, and educational materials.

What now?

Right now, the City is drafting the regulations that dictate how BERDO 2.0 will be implemented and enforced. There are a lot of details that need to be worked out, especially around protecting renters from displacement.

ACE is continuing to work with the City to draft the regulations. We're partnering on a process similar to the one we used to draft the ordinance, that prioritizes community members and neighborhoods most impacted by environmental and systemic racism to ensure that the policy we design meets their needs.

For more information: contact Sofia Owen, ACE's Staff Attorney & Director of Environmental Justice Legal Services, sofia@ace-ej.org .